

# VALLEY WOMEN'S VOICE

December 1989

*A Chronicle of Feminist Thought & Action*

## MARCH!

by Leigh Ann Knope

About 300,000 people rallied at Washington D.C., November 12, at the march for women's equality and demanded their right to reproductive freedom. Their own worlds illustrate the march more vividly than any second-hand description or commentary ever could.

"Dear politicians: Listen loud and clear. It is choice we want, or your career," they chanted. The pro-choicers, male and female, young and old, of all races, classes, ethnicities and sexual preferences, were addressed by over 30 speakers.

Dr. Joseph E. Lowery, President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), said the government will not be allowed to take the basic reproductive rights away from women.

"We've come too far, we've marched too long, we've prayed too hard, we've wept too bitterly, we've bled too profusely and we've died too young."

Molly Yard, President of the National Organization for Women (NOW), said that pro-choicers are building a political army on behalf of women across the world. "We pledge that we will do everything in our power, even if we must go to jail, to preserve [a woman's] right to choose," Yard said.

"Calling all women. Calling all women," Bylyce Avery yelled. "We have got to get together or die."

The anti-choice demonstrators were greatly outnumbered. Many of them stood on street corners, holding distorted pictures of aborted fetuses, and tried to stop the marchers as they passed by.

But the pro-choicers walked on, carrying placards that read, "Against abortion? Then don't have one; that's your choice," "Stop pretending that laws will end abortion," and "Prevent the murder of women."

David Dinkins, mayor-elect of New York City, said that today's opponents can be tomorrow's allies. He said, "We call upon President Bush, in the strongest possible terms, to reverse his vetoes and restore federally funded abortions to poor women."

Other speakers continued to warn the President: "George Bush, read our lips, no more votes for you."; "Mr. President, beware. We have strength in numbers. And, we will win."

Many of the pro-choicers said they expect a feminiza-

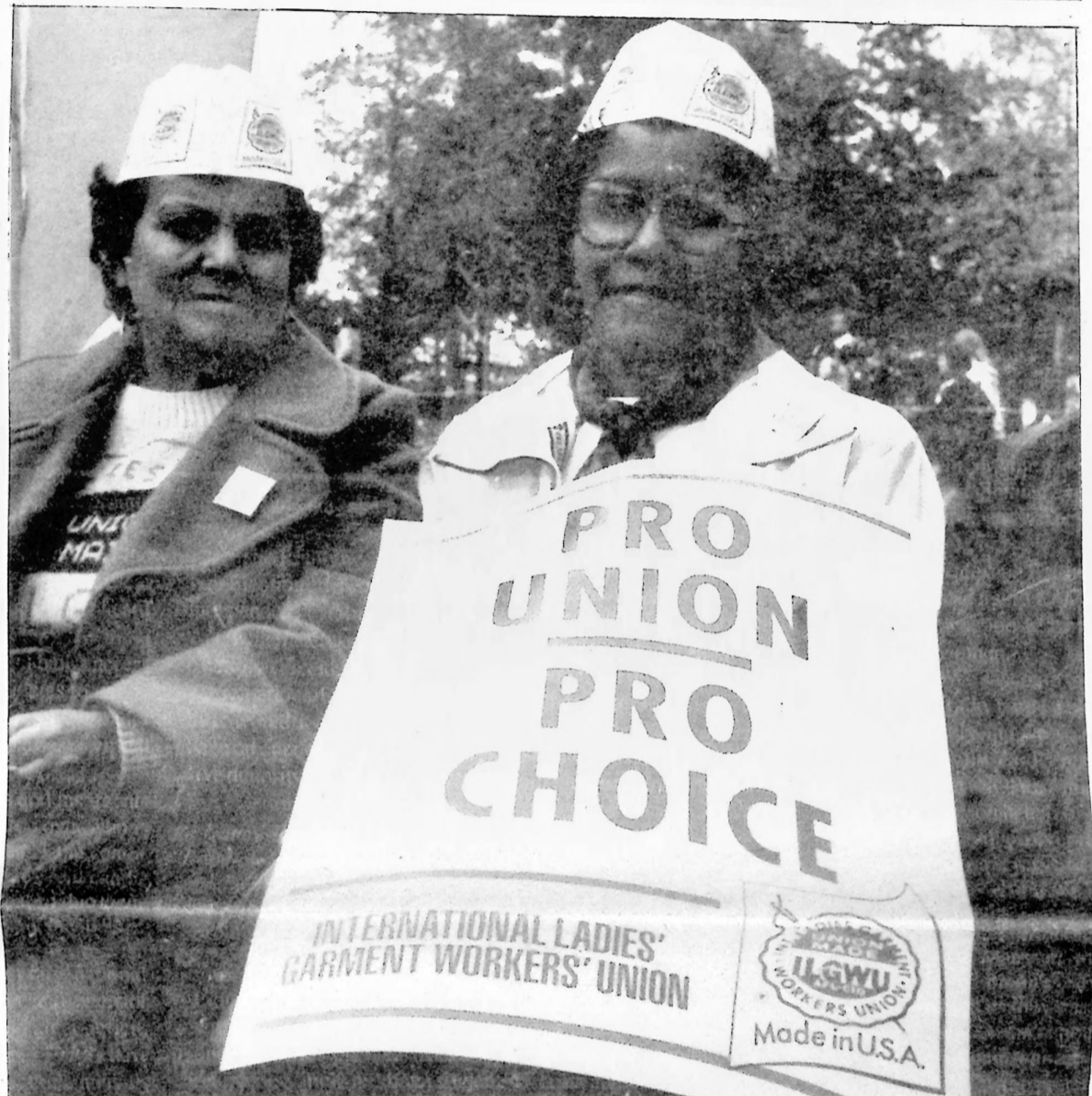


Photo by Nacine Berrini

tion of power in the United States in their lifetimes. Led by a speaker, they took the feminists voters' pledge. "I pledge not to vote for, nor to support, with my money or time, any candidate, for any office, who does not fully support and work for women's equality and the right to safe, legal and accessible abortions."

Patricia Ireland, Vice President-Executive of NOW, said that 1,027 pro-choice events occurred in the United States throughout the day. The demonstrations started at sunrise at Kennebunk, Maine, and ended in San Francisco

with a sunset vigil.

The President of the United Students Association also addressed the demonstrators at D.C. She said there is a groundswell of activism on college campuses for women's rights. "Today's students are pro-choice," she said. "America's future is pro-choice."

Peter and Mary (of Peter, Paul and Mary) were among the entertainers at the march: "We are a gentle, angry people," Mary began, "and we are singing for our lives."

## Twisted Politics

by Nancy Ross

Last summer was not a good summer for democracy. There was an increase in racial and anti-gay violence across the country. The Supreme Court turned back the clock by dramatically narrowing civil rights and severely restricting abortion rights. And in Congress, Senator Jesse Helms and Rep. William Dannemeyer led a right wing assault on the democratic rights of gay Americans. Their intent: to stir up homophobia and mass hatred of gay people. Their tactic: to attach gratuitous and hateful amendments to progressive legislation.

Helms attached an amendment to the Interior Appropriations Bill to ban federal grants to support "obscene or indecent" art. The amendment was aimed at stopping particular exhibits, such as those of the late gay photographer Robert Mapplethorpe. Helms boasted that any Senator who voted against his amendment would be seen as voting for pornography. A slightly revised version of the amendment remains in the current bill. Helms also threatened to amend the pending Hate Crimes Statistics Act, a national

data collection bill, to exclude instances of gay bashing and other anti-gay violence.

Helms' vicious hatemongering marred the passage of the historic Americans with Disabilities Act in the Senate. Late in the debate on the bill, which for the first time extends civil rights protections to persons with disabilities, including persons with AIDS, Helms raised the concern that gays would be afforded protection by the legislation, and Senator William Armstrong introduced an amendment to insure that they were not. A revised version of the amendment which lumps homosexuality with pedophilia, kleptomania and compulsive gambling remains in the current version of the bill.

The axes of the anti-gay hatred ground away in the House as the right wing sought to prohibit the use of federal funds to support education projects for gay youth, refused to earmark a specific amount of money for AIDS research and deleted funding for a national survey of sexual behavior, considered crucial in developing AIDS-prevention programs.

On June 29, Rep. Dannemeyer read into the Congressional Record an explicit statement entitled, "What Homosexuals Do," because "the public deserves to be fully informed on this subject as their representatives are asked to pass legislative items on the homosexual agenda, such as the Civil Rights, hate crimes and AIDS bills."

Our so-called liberal legislators, constantly on the defensive, have failed to respond to the right wing with a coherent and systematic opposition. There has been no direct challenge to Helms, nor has there even been an effective procedural response to the right wing tactic of forcing voice votes on these last minute amendments.

Why won't our legislators stand up to Helms? Why won't they speak passionately on behalf of the majority of decent people in this country who believe in protecting the rights of all Americans? How do we stop the political momentum of the far right and regain the progressive initiative in Congress?

continued on p. 8

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## Letter from the VWV Collective:

Glad to be back after our two-month hiatus! Although we haven't been publishing, we've been quite busy. We have been chipping away at the tasks of improving our business and administrative procedures and refining our goals as a feminist collective/journal. We are also continuing to work on increasing communication with our readers; we will be including a "Letter from the Collective" in each issue to help keep you more in touch with who we are and what we are doing.

A mainstay in the "streamlining" effort has been VWV member Henrietta Shannon, who is now serving as Office Coordinator. Community members who can spare an hour or two a week are invited to help us keep our office running smoothly. Call Henrietta at 545-2436 to find out how. Her office hours Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 11 AM to 1 PM and she would love to hear from you.

During the past month we held a Pagemaker computer training session taught by Jill Stoddard of the Massachusetts Free Press (thanks Jill!), and conducted an orientation session for new collective members. If you are interested in finding out more about the Collective, please let us know. Our next meeting will be on Thursday, December 14, at 5:15pm, in room 321 Student Union, UMass.

The members of the *Valley Women's Voice* are: Peg Aloï, Nadine Berrini, Maribeth Bernardy, Debbie Connolly, Leigh Ann Knope, Toni Maschler, Karen Paris, Joanna Schwartz, Henrietta Shannon, Tamara Silberman, Alice K. Stanislawsky.

We think that this is a very exciting time for the *Valley Women's Voice*. We have several new members with new ideas and new energy; we are refining our policy statement and our constitution to better reflect the goals and attitudes of the current Collective; we are building links with individuals and groups within the feminist community. All of us are working hard to improve the Valley's feminist Voice; we welcome your contributions and help!

## WISH LIST:

• **Macintosh Computer** : We currently produce this newspaper without our own computer. A personal or business donation to the *Valley Women's Voice* is tax deductible.

• **Distribution Coordinator and Distributors** : Have you sometimes had a hard time finding a copy? An hour or two per month can keep the *Voice* well distributed. Advertising exchanges are possible!

• **Typists** : Want to learn how to use a Macintosh and improve your typing? We're happy to train you and we'd love to have your help.

• **Reporters** : There are many wonderful (or awful) events that should be covered. If you are going to a newsworthy event, give us a call and ask whether we need someone to cover it.

• **ETC** : There are other items and services we could use. If you have a skill or gadget you think might be helpful, please let us know.

## Inside the Voice: ONE VIEW

This is a far from complete explanation for any of you who are wondering about this paper that you see monthly, or sometimes more sporadically, filtering through the community. The *Valley Women's Voice* is not some business operating to churn out a newspaper. We are a woman's collective, and collectivity is at the core of our relationships with each other and the paper.

Being a collective, by definition, means that we work by consensus. Every VWV member has the right and opportunity to partake in any paper decision, although she may choose not to. This concept of collectivity may sound very ideal but it also involves a great deal of time, energy, patience, tolerance and listening.

The VWV is also run on a volunteer basis. This translates into a lot of things for members of the paper. Sometimes it means that it is hard to remember why we are giving so much and simultaneously becoming drained and exhausted. It means that our membership is fluid and therefore it is difficult to get the paper to a point of security and consistency. No one is assigned tasks, and this freedom of choice sometimes results in the less glamorous tasks being neglected.

So, all this is sounding mighty dismal and I'm sure it is hard to imagine at this point why anyone would want to be involved in this long-winded precarious project. Well, as a member of this collective for the past year and a half, I obviously feel differently.

Being part of a women's collective is both exhilarating and challenging. It teaches you the art of listening and

respecting other people's opinions; after all, by definition their voice carries as much weight as your own. It gives you a real sense of bonding. When the paper comes out we don't just see it as the final product but as a series of essential cogs, without which this product would not be possible: the efforts that get devoted to the paper. We have to feed ourselves and each other with the energy and drive that a pay-check might provide for a nine to five worker.

The fact that we are a volunteer collective and not just a traditional hierarchical paper means that not only is our paper a journal of Feminist thought, but our process constitutes that as well. It is very difficult to maintain collective status. Society is organized in a way that prohibits it. Collectives have been historically co-opted through the need for federal or state funds or grants that insist on hierarchical organization. Collectives also dissolve through the problems described earlier that result in a high burn-out rate.

The VWV is in its eleventh year of existence. We have experienced many transitions along the way. The membership, the ideals, and the goals may have evolved countless times along the way, but fundamentally the paper has been preserved. We remain a feminist collective, self-sustaining and dedicated to producing a journal which provides a forum for dialogue within the women's community.

We are open to new ideas and faces so if this sounds like something that you are looking for and something you might be able to contribute to... LET'S TALK!!

Debbie Connolly

Don't submit to patriarchy...  
Submit to the *Voice*!

Send articles, letters, photos, poetry, etc.

## POLICY STATEMENT.

The *Valley Women's Voice*, a monthly feminist newsjournal, welcomes women's writings, poetry, graphics, and photography that reflect a feminist commitment to the empowerment of all women. The *Voice* provides a forum for women to share challenging and controversial ideas; vital information and resources; lively humor, rage, celebration, struggle; and an increasing awareness of and respect for diversity among women. We aim to communicate and strengthen bonds between women by making them visible in our pages.

The *Valley Women's Voice* is produced on a collective, consensus, volunteer basis by a group of feminists who disagree on as many things as we agree on. We often do not agree with all opinions expressed in the *Voice* by individual authors, but we accept responsibility for choosing to print everything in the paper.

Although we have created the *Valley Women's Voice* with fairly clear ideas about what we want this newsjournal to be, we also view it as an ongoing opportunity for all of us-readers and collective members-

to learn more about ourselves, each other and the many truths of feminism.

## CONTRIBUTION GUIDELINES

The *Valley Women's Voice* welcomes letters, essays, narratives, interviews, newsbriefs, poems, short stories, cartoons, graphics, and photographs. Written submissions should be 3 to 5 pages typed, double spaced. Your name, address, and phone number must be enclosed with all materials so that we may verify submissions and/or contact you to discuss any necessary editorial changes. A short biographical statement is also appreciated. An author who-for reasons of confidentiality-does not wish her name to be printed should indicate this when submitting items. Please enclose a SASE if you would like materials returned to you. The decision to print materials is made collectively, and all major editorial changes are made in conjunction with the author. Although we cannot afford to pay contributors, we do send a complimentary copy of the issue in which your item appears. Send submissions to: *Valley Women's*

*Voice*, 321 Student Union Building, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003. If you have ideas for future articles, or are not sure how your particular interests and talents may add to the paper, call us and let's discuss the possibilities. Our number is (413)545-2436.

## CALENDAR &amp; ANNOUNCEMENT LISTINGS

The *Valley Women's Voice* would like to print announcements and publicize events of interest to women. Listings are free and should be kept to 5 lines in length. (Items will be edited to fit space constraints.) Announcements for non-profit organizations will be given preference and additional space when it is available.

We request that Calendar listings provide the following information: name, date, time, and location of the event; cost of attending the event (sliding scale? work exchange?); the sponsor of the event and recipient of proceeds, if any; a statement about accessibility for disabled women (wheelchair accessible? ASL interpreted?); a phone number where inquiries

may be directed.

Individuals and organizations may request that a photograph be printed along with a Calendar listing. A nominal fee is charged to cover printing costs. Only black-and-white photographs can be accepted. Due to space constraints, we may not be able to accept all photographs for publication, and preference will be given to non-profit organizations.

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# No Voice Loud Enough

by Holly Daschback

No Voice Loud Enough is a group of three women in the process of compiling for publication, oral histories of single mothers and their children who have been homeless. As the founder of the group and the former Children's Advocate at Pathways Family Shelter in Framingham, Massachusetts, I believe that it is crucial that those who have been through the crisis of homelessness be given an opportunity to tell their stories.

We are in the process now, of interviewing women who have lived at Pathways, and are currently living in apartments secured during their stay at the shelter. I am excited about the possibilities this project offers in terms of raising public awareness, and literally giving a face and a name to those who have been homeless. By researching and writing about the effects of homelessness on a personal, individual level, we hope to incite and impel community groups, concerned citizens, and policy makers to take a critical look at this issue and devise humane and innovative solutions to the problem. In order to work to end homelessness, we must first have the courage to hear directly from those who have experienced it first-hand:

"It was almost degrading to me and humiliating to me to go to the interview, but when I was accepted into Pathways Shelter, it was, um, like a relief. It was—I'm going to be able to do this on my own.' Part of it was my own self...um, when I was in the program in New Hampshire, I had told myself 'I will never go back on welfare. I will never seek help like that again.' I felt like I was going back on myself, and of course, there's the other side of the coin, it's very hard to ask for help—to say, 'I'm not capable right now, and I need help in this area.' I had convinced myself that I would never have to do that again. That I was going to be the help that my children needed—that I wasn't going to need help.

"I was a little nervous because I knew that I was going to be meeting new people, but I was excited—I was being given an opportunity that I had almost lost hope for, you know, ninety days—to establish a home and an income, which down in Florida, all the hope for that was being drained from me as I got deeper and deeper into debt...Being homeless, never, never, would I have—it was inconceivable. But then again homelessness has been around for a long time and it's only just coming out...it was overlooked before as the old bag ladies, drug addicts, winos—that's not true, it's families, it's children, it's people needing help and not knowing where to go for help. When I first went into the program, it was a relief to know that other people were in the same situation. But now, I get infuriated when I think of how much pain people have to go through. I um, I don't believe that money in this country is spread out fairly. I don't believe

that there's any reason for homelessness. When a person comes to a point where they're able to say 'I need help,' there's got to be a help system there. It can't be a system that says, 'Well, maybe in 60 days we'll have a place for you to stay.' 'Cause in that time you could lose everything. The particular problem is so extreme now, and, I don't know enough about how the systems work. I know—that they're not working right, I don't know how to make them right other than to pray that we get some good government in there. I don't believe all these monies should be spent on nuclear bombs and studies on this and that. We, quote, unquote, America, are the richest people in the world, but we've got people starving.

"I have my housing 707 certificate, which saves me \$800 a month. If I didn't have that, I would not have been able to survive this long. Um, bills, Christmastime, I got behind, and you know, it's like I'm still getting myself out of the rut. But never like I used to see myself. It's not a hopeless situation. My food stamps, I'd say do me about three weeks out of the month. Um, money-wise, one check goes out immediately on bills, and the second check—a little bit of it will go out on bills that are left over and the rest on taxables. And I've made a promise to myself that I'd take the kids out once a week to McDonalds or pizza, and that's faithful. This is just something I feel, that the kids need to have what the other kids have. They don't understand why the grass is greener on the other side; they don't have to understand that. But, I'm going to make sure that the grass isn't so much greener that they hurt inside. A lot of times, I've been sick because I couldn't go out and get something special that was really important to the kids, and I've bent over backwards to make sure they've got it. Because it is important to them; that's part of their emotional development and growth. It's so important that, even on a fixed income, you have to make room in the budget for emotions, and um, so that's what I've done.

"I don't even feel like a minority; I feel like an untitled class. You know, you have your black minority, your low-income female minority, the single mother, but being in a shelter puts you in a whole new class that society hasn't accepted yet. They haven't made space for these people yet. There hasn't been enough—we need more, we need more people to speak out for the homeless. We need more of the homeless to cry out for help. I just get infuriated when I think of how little is being done. When I heard that a representative, one of our representatives here in Massachusetts, was actually going to vote against Governor Dukakis' plans for homelessness prevention, I was insulted because I'm here. I'm one of them, you know, it's like the representative doesn't even know I exist, and um, you could take all of us

and put us together and we probably still wouldn't make a loud enough voice to be heard.

"For me personally, I've learned a little bit about humiliation and understanding—that it doesn't hurt so much as you think it's gonna. In general, I learned a new compassion for people that have lost, or are losing so many things that are important to them because of homelessness. Um, it hurts, it really hurts. It hurts me to think that um, things aren't going to get better. You know, to think that way, to believe in my heart that they're going to, is what I have to do every day. But to think in my head that they might not, to listen to publicity as it is and to hear how it's not getting better. I have four children, I—I think of my children and what this country is supposed to do for them. The system, the system works the way it wants to. Um- I think society is afraid of change. Afraid of letting anybody else fit in. It's like the snobs at a party, you know, they don't want to let the— poor old soul down the street in, because he's poor and doesn't look good. But yet, he's probably the one that would fit in the best, but they don't want to give him the chance. And that's how I see society looking at welfare people. Um, I don't like collecting an AFDC check; I don't like going to the mailbox and pulling out a check and going to the bank and cashing it; I don't like being supported by the system. Right now, that's all I can do; I can't do it different. I almost feel bad for this society that doesn't want to make space for me. Because I am one of those people. I can be a strength, I can fit in with society very well, and I almost feel like it's their loss, and how many others out there feel that way, you know?"

by Melissa, age six:

"Once upon a time, there was a little girl named Jennifer and she was sad because she didn't have a house. She was crying because she was so sad. Her friend Jeffrey saw that she was crying and he asked her if she wanted to go to the park. And she was so glad and so happy and she went to the park with him. Jennifer liked Jeff because he was nice to her and took her to the park.

Jeffrey told Jennifer that there was a little girl lost in the park. They looked on the swings—she wasn't there. They looked under the slide—she wasn't there. They saw some footprints on a path going in to the woods. They followed the footprints, and at the end of the path they found the little girl!

The lost little girl was so happy and they ran all the way to her house. Jeff said "Jen, let's run to your house now." Then Jennifer was so sad because she remembered that she didn't have a house. But when she got to Jeff's house, there were Jennifer's parents at the house next door. They had surprised her with her new house!"

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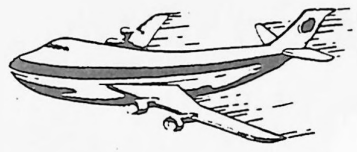
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Untitled

You fill my mouth with spun gold;  
I choke.  
Pennies I would welcome, or orange peels.  
Dirty socks would better fit  
my mouth of teeth and spit and tongue  
than this elemental prince.  
It will not even tarnish  
hermetic, idly old  
like you

Toni Maschler

P  
O  
E  
T  
R  
Y

Writer before the Word

Veiled gestures, vain in thumbs, force  
forearms to clench outside, splitting  
wrists from blue to green.

P  
Q  
ä

Digging Out

I drive the shovel's cutting edge  
into the mound  
one deep stab  
then another. . .  
my back begins to ache  
my heart thumps  
in its chamber  
anticipated beats  
like a funeral drum  
I listen to them  
like a voyeur. . .  
shallow breath  
escapes my lips  
I have uncovered  
another layer  
of past hurts  
while the wind  
rapes my hair  
my eyes mist  
but with numbed hands  
I keep digging  
deep, deeper  
trying to free myself  
from life's new storm  
and old  
frozen regrets

Jill Dimaggio

Fathers

I remember the drinker  
When I tiptoed in the dark  
whiskey bottles rolled and crashed.  
He slept near the toilet mouth open  
Mornings the bathroom vomited.  
His fluttering hands spilling coffee  
red eyes watching me.

The resting one took me shopping once  
blue tennis shoes a balloon to match  
Evenings his eyes were glass.  
He lay asleep-awake on the bed.  
Knocks at the door floated him  
to men with tiny white packages.

This father's been here awhile  
the one with the tightened fists.  
Now I am furniture  
or a noise in his head.

My mother's kicked body crawls up the step  
Her muffled screams scrape the walls  
her silence scaring me.  
Early mornings she practices walking.  
Makeup molded to her cheeks.

Mostly I dream  
trying to find a man who is mist  
a shadow behind my shoulder.  
Warm hands folded over laughter.  
I close my eyes  
and search for my father's face.

Georgeann Eskievich Rettberg

In wide illumination eyes scatter chameleon  
over the liquid pages. Stiffening  
like blown glass, too sculptor fresh-  
words shatter nerve patterns yet  
play out predestination.

L. Knauf Thomson

# Cuts: Who's Hit the Hardest?

*The following is excerpted from a speech given by Professor Sandra Morgen at a panel on October 24th concerning the effects of the budget cuts at the University of Massachusetts.*

Over the past 3 years the state appropriations to U Mass have been reduced by 17.2 million, with a further cut of 6-8 million proposed - This is an examination of what it means for a state to so drastically cut funds for public higher education and policy, national and state spending priorities, particularly the disproportionate amount of money that goes to the military, and other political realities.

My particular task is to start us off with an overview of the impact of the cuts on this campus, particularly on students who, historically, and again today, have been denied or restricted access to higher education. By now many on the campus are very aware of the more general impact of cuts — on library, layoffs of staff, including 52 cooperative extension staff, on class size and availability, and on the pattern of tuition and fee hikes. Further cuts are anticipated, almost certainly they will lead to undergraduate admissions and more fee and tuition hikes. Over the last several days I have done research on some of the particular impacts of budget cuts on the programs that this University has developed to increase access and retention of students who are labeled "non traditional" — not white, male, 18-22, or middle class. These are almost always students from working class and/or families of color; many of them are dealing with full time jobs, children, often with significant financial difficulty to support their education, sometimes trying to survive on welfare, and any number of other issues that impact on their lives and successes as students. Specifically I spoke with representatives in the following programs — the Everywoman's Center, the University Without Walls, the Labor Center, CCEBMS, and Basic Math. NOT COINCIDENTALLY, most of these are both the programs that serve those students traditionally denied access to the University and the same programs that have suffered (with Cooperative Extension) the most significant cuts in the University. There are many of us on this campus who see a pattern here — that while most academic programs suffer cuts in the neighborhoods of 4-1% the Everywoman's Center, University Without Walls, and the Labor Center are all facing cuts of between 30-49%; and Basic Math may be cut entirely. I will address briefly about what the cuts mean for these programs, going into greater depth about two of them, not because they are more important, but because they illustrate the more general patterns we need to be paying attention to.

The Everywoman's Center's goal is to promote educational access and educational equity for women in higher education. The budget of the Everywoman's Center has been deeply cut, with the most substantial cuts in programs that provide aid to the most disadvantaged women. Over three years they have lost three full time professional staff positions; two completely, one frozen; two-thirds of these lost within the last year. One of these positions was the Coordinator of the WAGES program - Women's Admissions and General Education Support — the program most directly connected to the original purpose of the Center, according to Carol Wallace, Director of EWC. Wallace was told not just to cut a professional staff position when the WAGES program went; she was directed to cut that particu-

lar position which would not have been the decision of the EWC if given their choice. WAGES targeted low income women, most were single, on welfare and needing an array of support services before even applying to the University, including housing, childcare, and welfare advocacy. WAGES staff often worked with women for up to a year even before admission. This was a program that did more than talk the rhetoric of access, it made it a reality for welfare recipients searching for a way out of the cycle of poverty. Without WAGES fewer of these women get admitted and those that do receive far fewer services from the University. The Center also lost a Legal Advocacy position and the Working Women's Program position is frozen. Again programs designed to help unemployed and underemployed women, women with problems in the workplace and women in non-traditional jobs, get a higher education. On top of these cuts in positions the operating budget of the EWC was cut in half and this came in August after some of the year's money had already been spent during the summer. That means the EWC can hire fewer students, that all its programs are understaffed, stretched to the limits; that duplication of materials including training materials for counselor advocates, telephone and postage, are very limited. In fact there is no long distance budget for the program this year; the budget now is enough to cover only basic phone lines, and even that will be reduced with the new phone system next year which, because more expenses will likely result in fewer lines...

University Without Walls has a similar story to tell. They have been told to expect a forty-eight percent reduction over two years because, like the EWC, they are "not central to the mission of the University." UWW has been level funded since 1975 — so it has been around a long time though it has not been able to grow despite showing extraordinary accomplishments of graduates. UWW recruits and then provides services for students who are generally coming to college after years in the labor force, mostly working class students without a background of higher education in their families; students average age is thirty-five; most work full time; many are on financial aid and AFDC (twenty to twenty-five); sixty percent are women; fifteen percent are minority — higher than University as a whole. The program currently has two outreach centers, one in Springfield and, one in Worcester, and also works with students in Amherst. Each year about 60 students are served by each of the Outreach Centers, and another 125 or so are served here at the University. UWW helps students design portfolios that earn them "prior learning experience" for what they have learned in the workforce (cutting down the number of credits they must earn at the University, offers special UWW courses here and at Outreach Centers, and helps students plan the rest of their college curriculum. The program is very successful and has a loyal following. Since the cuts have been announced over 1600 have signed a petition protesting the cuts, and the Chancellor has received over 200 phone calls in support of the program. This very substantial cut will lead to the loss of a number of key positions in the Program; it will almost certainly mean the closing of the Worcester Outreach Center and perhaps the Springfield Center, in part because of the reduced budget, and in part because the Provost has indicated that this is a program that is expendable. Such closings will have their greatest impact on the poorest of the students UWW serves, and many of the students of color the program serves.

The Labor Center has been targeted for a twenty-nine percent cut which for a small program is like a deathblow, according to their FY 91 budget means cutting either the Directors position, two half time professional librarians, the entire library account, the half time clerical position, the film library, and two-thirds of the director's salary. The Labor Center is a rather unique program, one of few university programs that provides services and training directly to the labor movement — on a much smaller scale, for example, than the School of Management does for the business community. It has an excellent national reputation; its Master's Degree students (currently forty-five) are fifty percent female and almost twenty percent minority. Many of the important labor leaders in this state have direct ties to this program, often as graduates, sometimes finding the Labor Center a rare resource ready to do research and training for unions and union members...

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## *"The most substantial cuts [are] in programs that provide aid to the most disadvantaged women"*

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This leads me to a more general point that was made by almost all of the program directors and representatives I spoke to, that in cutting some of these programs not only will some students, again mainly the non-traditional students, never get admitted to the University, but those here will be denied the special academic and other support services they need to succeed. This will ultimately lead to them being forced out of here because at the same time that the services they need are cut, the Provost has announced that it will be much harder for students who are on academic suspension (more likely for these students without these programs) to be readmitted because it will be an easy way to help trim undergraduate enrollments. Irma McLarin-Allen, acting Director of CCEBMS and Dean at CASIAC was particularly concerned about this because it will be one of the more protracted and invisible ways that students of color, students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and students juggling more external responsibilities than most students, e.g. families, jobs etc., will be forced out of the University over time.

It is clear that the programs that serve the non-traditional students have been cut more severely than other programs, and program directors have been told this is because they are either "not central to the mission of the University" other than their programs are not cost-effective, i.e., that the cost of their programs relative to numbers of students served is too high for the University to take. Yet these are the very programs the University has recognized to be crucial if the University is going to be open to and supportive of economically disadvantaged students seeking to better themselves through a public higher education. In my mind the mission of a public institution is to serve the broadest segment of a state's population, and not merely to be open to those disadvantaged students but to include the programs necessary to enable them to succeed. We must all really question what it means to define these programs as peripheral to the "central mission" of this University.

continued on p. 8

## Review

by Peg Aloia

**Trash by Dorothy Allison, publisher: Firebrand Books \$8.95**

Dorothy Allison prefaces her first collection of stories with a short piece entitled "Deciding to Live". She details how she moved from storytelling to writing, from sharing family and childhood anecdotes with lovers, to writing and polishing and embellishing these tales, transforming them into literature.

Concluding the preface, Allison says: "I write stories. I write fiction. I put on the page a third look at what I've seen in life—the condensed and reinvented experience of a cross-eyed working-class lesbian, addicted to violence, language, and hope, who has made the decision to live, on the page and in the street, for me and mine."

this "third look" seems an apt description. Clearly, the rawness of the actual experience has been softened somewhat by the eloquence of Allison's prose. But this work is

infused with elements of the writer's strange and dangerous upbringing, elements that recur in every story, and on every page. There are the strong women, stubborn and steady Southern women, who suffer at the hands of their spouses and sons, but remain silent, trying to hold their families together in the wake of calamity. And Allison's childhood was calamitous; there are disappearances, mysterious suicides, and bizarre, gruesome accidents—a feeling of here one minute, gone the next. Allison's huge family, her myriad cousins and aunts and uncles, are wiped out of these stories as quickly as they are conjured. In "River of Names" and "The Meanest Woman Who Ever Left Tennessee" and "Gospel Song," these tragic deaths and partings are conveyed as fundamental components of the narrator's world—expected, and accepted, even if they are terrifying and sad. There is fear and rage and shame in these stories, as we read of a young lesbian who tries, again and again, to fit in with people whose backgrounds are more affluent (in "Steal Away"), more educated (in "I'm Working on my Charm"), and, somehow, more "healthy" than hers. There is sex—a palliative at times, but also a ritual (in "Muscles of the Mind"), a form of expression (in "A Lesbian Appetite"), and sometimes a substitute for elusive intimacy (in "Mon-

keybites"). Allison's prose is tender and touching as often as it is funny and vicious—it is a celebration of her life, of what it was and what it has become.

There is never any question that choosing to survive, intact and sane, after a childhood colored by incest and violence and neglect, is a profoundly courageous act. When survival transcends healthy, well-adjusted maturity, and equals empowered creativity: it is then that books like Trash are born. This collection of stories is a map detailing and amazing journey, from a childhood fraught with pain, poverty, and ignorance, to a womanhood that is open-minded, forgiving, and loving.

Given Allison's honest testimonial in her preface, many readers will read and enjoy these stories as glimpses and slices of a life. Even when the names are changed, when the situations are fabricated, Dorothy Allison's life pulses through this book. Some readers may not care that these stories are autobiographical. Some readers may prefer to leave the preface unread, to ignore the stories' connecting themes. After all, most of us assume that writers draw from their own experiences. But, for what it's worth, Allison herself offers these stories as testament to her survival and her art.

# SURVIVORS' BULLETIN BOARD

## SURVIVOR'S BULLETIN BOARD

*Survivor's Bulletin Board is a place where women survivors of child abuse (sexual, physical, emotional) can exchange information about resources that have helped them in their healing. Do you have a favorite book, article or newsletter? Do you know of a conference, workshop or other event of special interest to survivors? We need to know. Send information about your healing resources and your personal impressions of them to: Bulletin Board, P.O. Box 295, Northampton, MA 01061.*

## Books for Children Related To Sexual Abuse

Many survivors have found that taking action in preventing child sexual abuse helps us in our healing. Many of us know children and want to do what we can to insure they are not sexually abused. SBB recommends these books to be used in talking with children about sexual abuse. When talking with children about abuse and ways they can deal with it, it is good to think about ways to help the child's self-esteem, general self-assertiveness and being comfortable with her or his body, as well as talking about what to do with abusive or invasive touch.

As we stressed in the September *Survivors Bulletin Board*, working to prevent child sexual abuse is a large and complex job, mostly for adults to do. A possible pitfall of any book written for children about preventing sexual abuse is that it is used as the main, and sometimes the only, method of prevention. If you want a copy of the first column in this series about sexual abuse prevention literature, send .25 and a self-addressed stamped envelope to SBB. In next month's column, we will look at books for parents and other adults working with children.

Do you know of books for children on these topics that we could review? Do you know of books written for ages 7-12 that deals with possible abuse? Please let us know!

## FOR VICTIMS OF ABUSE

*Something Happened And I'm Scared To Tell*, a book for young victims of abuse, by Patricia Kehoe, Parenting Press 1988. Written for children ages three to seven who are suspected of having been abused. A friendly lion assures a frightened child that it wasn't her fault, that she needs to tell somebody and keep telling until someone listens.

*Something Is Wrong At My House*, a book about parent's fighting, written by Diane Davis, illustrated by Marina Megale, Parenting Press 1984. Two sets of text allow the book to be used with both preschool and school age children. The child observes his parents fighting, talks about how he feels, what he does because of that (fights with his sister, gets in trouble at school). He talks with a neighbor who doesn't believe him. He then talks to his teacher who gets him some phone numbers to call. This isn't about violence directed at a child, but of the problems and reactions are similar.

## FOR ALL CHILDREN

*I Like You To Make Jokes With Me, But I Don't Want You To Touch Me*, by Ellen Bass Lollipop Power 1985. A mother helps her preschool-age daughter respond to a supermarket worker who tickles her. Shows a child saying no to uncomfortable touch by a relative stranger with parental support. Written by one of the coauthors of *The Courage To Heal*.

*The Trouble With Secrets*, by Karen Johnson, Parenting Press 1986. The purpose of this book is to help children learn when to share and when to keep secrets. Keeping the secret of confusing and bad touch and being hurt by someone are mentioned along with breaking a vase, the password to the clubhouse, and a birthday surprise. The emphasis is on telling someone when you feel anxious about the secret. A good adjunct in a prevention program. Written for preschool and early elementary ages.

*Loving Touches*, a book for children about positive, caring kinds of touching, by Lory Freeman, Parenting Press, 1986. Truly loving touches are as necessary as food when we are hungry and warmth when we are cold. This basic need remains with us throughout life. Written for preschoolers.

*There's No Such Thing As A Dragon*, by Jack Kent, Golden Books 1975. Billy wakes up to see a dragon on his bed. He tells his mother who says, "There's no such thing as a dragon." The dragon, growing fast, greatly inconveniences the day, but no one talks about it because "there's no such thing as a dragon". A great book to start discussion about very obvious things that are not being discussed (alcoholism, physical or sexual abuse, or other family dragons). Written for preschool to elementary ages.

## SELF-ESTEEM

*The Mouse, The Monster and Me, Assertiveness for Young People*, by Pat Palmer, Impact Publishers 1977. "This book is full of ideas about how to grow up to be assertive, make good decisions and stand up for yourself." Chapters include Your Strength and Power, Your Rights and Responsibilities, Asking for What You Want, Saying "No". With cartoon illustrations and spaces to write responses. For ages 8-12.

*Liking Myself*. Chapters include Feelings, Feeling Talk, Allowing (you can be different and still be OK), Body Talk, and Letting Go (letting other people be different). With cartoon illustrations and space to write or draw responses. For Ages 5-9.

## BOOKS FOR TEENS

*Top Secret, Sexual Assault Information for Teenagers Only*, by Jennifer Fay and Billie Jo Flerchinger, King County Rape Relief 1982. Uses stories of specific situations, quizzes, advice columns to increase teens' awareness of sexual assault.

*So What's It To Me? Sexual Assault Information for Guys*, by Gayle Stringer and Deanna Rantis-Rodriguez, King County Rape Relief 1987. Provides information and addresses issues of self-image and peer relationships to increase awareness of and help prevent teenage male sexual assault and harassment. Also addresses issues of acquaintance rape.

*A Kid's First Book About Sex and The Playbook for Kids About Sex*, by Joani Blank and Marcia Quackenbush, Yes Press 1983. Both these books have essentially the same text. The Playbook has lots of room for writing and drawing responses. Chapters include Your Body, Nudity, Touching, What is Sexy?, Sex Parts, Feeling Sexy, Masturbation, Privacy, Sexual Intercourse, Partners, Being Together, Learning About Sex. Ages 7 thru preteen.

Parenting Press, 7744 31st Ave, NE, PO Box 15163, Seattle, WA 98115

Yes Press, PO Box 2086, Burlingame, CA 94010

Lollipop Power, PO Box 1171, Chapel Hill, NC 27514

King County Rape Relief, 1025 South 3rd, Suite C, Renton, WA 98055

Limited copies of "There's No Such Thing As A Dragon" are available through SBB. Send \$2.50 (checks made out to *Survivors Bulletin Board*) to the SBB address listed above.

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### MUSICAL

December 6-9, 8pm

Smith College Theater presents *The Colored Museum*, a spirited musical revue directed by Andrea Hairston. Gen. admission \$4, students and seniors \$2. Dec. 7th, all tickets are \$1! Dec. 9 benefit for Lesbian/Bisexual Alliance at Smith, tickets \$1 extra. Performance wheelchair accessible, bathrooms not. Theater 14, Green St. N'ton. 585-3220.

### PERFORMANCE

Dec. 8 & 9, 8pm

*The Better I Look*, an original piece by Keishya Salko and Angelique von Halle. Integrating theater, film, sound and image, this work celebrates women's sexuality, identity and strength. Hallie Flanagan Studio Theater, Smith College. Reservations: (413) 585-3220. Donations will benefit an AIDS organization.

### NEW WORLD THEATER

Multicultural Theater Conf. Dec. 8-10 For info contact the Five-College Third World Theater Committee.

Sat. Dec. 9,

10am-noon Panel discussion "Meeting at the Crossroads: What direction for the 1990's?" UMass Campus Center 163C.

3pm Winnetori's Snake Oil Show from Wigwam City, a production of Spiderwoman Theater, a Native American feminist troupe. Hampden Gallery, UMass.

8pm *Coming into Passion/ Song for a Sansei*, performed by Jude Narita. Explore the stereotypes and Realities of Asian Women. Bowker, UMass.

Sun. Dec. 10,

10am-noon Panel Discussion: "Tradition and a New Aesthetic." UMass CC 163C.

2pm *Unfinished Women Cry in No Man's Land While a Bird Dies in a Gilded Cage*, by Aisha Rahman.

### PUBLICATION CELEBRATION

Sun. Dec. 17, 2:30pm

*Bubbe Meisehs* by Shayne Maideles: An anthology of Poetry by Jewish Granddaughters about our Grandmothers, edited by local writer/poet Leslea Newman. Book-signing at Lunaria, 90 King St. N'ton. Info: 586-7851.

### PHOTOGRAPHY

through Dec. 18

## CALENDAR

Visual Celebrations, a collection of portraits and local scenic images by Barbara Brady Conn, at Steeplejacks in Sunderland.

### HOLIDAY DANCE

Sat. Dec 30 9pm-1am

NEWMR dance at the New Haven YWCA w/ Pthe Girlillas and DJ Melinda Pierce. ASL interpreted, smoke/chem/alcohol free. Wheelchair accessible. Tickets \$20 in advance, \$22 at door. Send check and SASE to NEWMR, PO Box 217, New Haven, CT 06513.

### DREAMWEAVERS WEEKEND

Feb. 9-11

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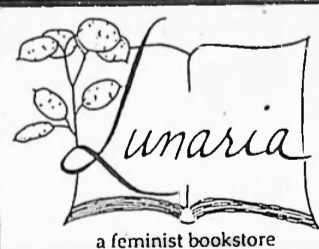
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# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## GROUPS FOR WOMEN SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

The women's Pavilion at Mercy Hospital is forming on-going support groups beginning in December. Facilitated by Pam Tyson, licensed certified social worker as well as a sexual and physical abuse survivor. For more info call the Pavilion at 785-4637, or Pam at 586-1835. Don't give up—healing is possible!

## SOCIALIST FEMINISTS ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE

In anticipation of a rapidly escalating war for women's liberation in the 1990's, Radical Women will sponsor a national conference to chart a course for militant feminist organizing. The conference will be held February 17-20, 1990 in Santa Monica, CA. Wheelchair accessible; childcare available. For info. call (415)864-1278 or write the Radical Women National Office, 523A Valencia, San Francisco, CA 94110.

## HOMEBASE

Interested about finding out about homelessness and affordable housing in Hampshire County? For more info. Call Lorraine or Cynthia at 413-586-9079.

## SAFER BIRTH CONTROL

Providence Hospital in Holyoke offers a Natural Family Planning Program. Learn a healthy option in birth control based on understanding natural cycles of fertility and infertility. Call the Center for Women's Health: 539-2955.

## LESBIAN IMMIGRANTS

New submission deadline: March 31, 1990. Short stories, essays, oral histories, etc. wanted for a collection on the experience of lesbian immigrants in the U.S. Work especially encouraged from undocumented, ESL, older, disabled, and third world Lesbian immigrants. Send submissions/inquiries and SASE to: The Project, c/o Lundy, 3 Madison St. Cambridge, MA 02138.

## LESBIANS AND AIDS

Seeking submissions for book, focussing on experiences of lesbian care partners and those who have lost close friends/family. For info: Book Project, 1414 17th St. NW #802, Washington DC 20036.

## DONATIONS NEEDED

ARISE for Social Justice will be having its annual Christmas party. Donations of new clothes, food, money, to go to homeless children are needed. For info. call Annette at (413) 734-4948.



*Unfinished Women Cry in No Man's Land While a Bird Dies in a Gilded Cage* is one of the highlights of this weekend's Multi-Cultural Theatre Conference (see the calendar for other listed events).

Photo courtesy of the UMass Dept. of Theater

## Twisted-- cont. from p. 1

An institutionalized inertia has long seized hold of Congress. Fattened by PAC money and big party support of incumbents, our legislators respond with a herd mentality—sticking closely together, shifting uneasily in the face of controversial votes, and never, never stepping out to mount any kind of effective political opposition.

The democratic position has become calcified. The right wing has taken over the Republican Party and won the last three Presidential elections. The Democratic party has moved rightward, self-consciously distancing itself from its traditional constituencies (i.e., labor, minorities, women) and openly courting neo-conservative. But worst of all for democracy, both parties, while failing to provide effective representation to the majority of Americans, have tried to make sure that no third or independent party can fill the void in leadership. They have done this by passing restrictive

ballot access laws and promoting unfair media access and campaign financing regulations.

The Rainbow Lobby is dedicated to removing the institutional barriers that keep out individuals who represent the voices of millions of Americans who are not being heard in the chambers of Congress.

One such barrier is ballot access. Current ballot access laws require independent Presidential candidates to gather 30 times the number of signatures collected by the major party candidates, guaranteeing the major parties a virtual monopoly over who can run for national office.

Opening up the ballot to independents and insurgents is one step in leveling the terrain for the battle over who is going to control the political process. It creates the conditions necessary for new leaders to emerge, i.e., real candidates who can run and win power positions that enable them to not only defend our rights against assaults by the likes of

Jesse Helms but take a political initiative on behalf of our interests.

The Rainbow Lobby staunchly supports bills like the Fair Elections Bill, which sets fair ballot access standards for independent candidates, the Universal Voter Registration Act, which increases accessibility of voter registration, and a national Presidential Debates bill that would guarantee the participation of significant independent candidates. These bills would loosen the stranglehold that the major parties have on our democracy and make it possible for the progressive majority of Americans to have effective representation.

*Nancy Ross is the national executive director of the Rainbow Lobby, an independent citizens' lobby in Washington, DC, which supports important legislation that affects civil, human, voting and democratic rights at home and abroad.*


## Cuts-- cont. from p. 5

Some of the cuts are more invisible or difficult to find out about because their effect is on already very small populations within the University. For example, Irma McLaurin-Allen of CCEBMS noted that the number of Native American students entering this fall was the smallest in a long time. For those Native American students here, their support from CCEBMS is insufficient—a thirty hour per week teaching assistant. Add to this a hiring freeze that is certainly an obstacle to replacing the one Native American faculty member we had (she died) and the Native professional staff person from Admissions who left. CCEBMS believes that this is an area where their program and others need to put a lot of attention, attention that will be very hard in the face of these cuts. In other words, some of what will be lost from this pattern of cuts is progress that has not yet

been made. We've already seen this pattern on a national level, a reality profoundly related to the nature and extent of out military spending. In the name of this budget deficit, many of the social programs of the 1960's and 1970's have been slashed before they had even begun to fundamentally change the social relations of power and privilege in this country. Can we in conscience allow this to happen at the University of Massachusetts?

It is clear that budget cuts are sometimes the occasion for policy or programmatic change, change that is often not well thought out nor considered by the larger faculty in a full review of programs targeted for demise e.g. WAGES, possible the Worcester and Springfield outreach centers of UWW, the Labor Center or the EWC as a whole down the road, and who knows what else. This kind of programmatic change because of fiscal emergency is in fact restructuring the University, and, if what I have found in the past week or

so is any indication, that restructuring is towards what the Provost and the Chancellor have defined as a smaller University, but also seems to be a University different in kind, one much less open to working class students, to welfare recipients, single mothers, students of color and possibly to handicapped or bilingual students. This is, it seems to me, counter to the mission of a public institution, a land-grant institution, an institution supported by the taxes of more and more of the population which will have less and less access to its riches. I am not denying that these budget cuts are anything but extremely difficult for the University to handle; I am saying that to handle them primarily by undermining the programs and needs that lend this university its greatest diversity and that offer those who have been denied opportunity historically a chance is NOT the course for this institution to take.




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